

Enhanced Native Grass Production

2007 Accomplishments

Restoring native prairie vegetation requires more than the presence of tall grasses. Restoration of proper habitat structure requires the presence of many native grasses and sedges, including prairie dropseed, vanilla grass, prairie oval sedge, and chairmaker's rush. The presence of these species in restored prairie habitats enhances plant species diversity, providing food plants for native insects, and correct habitat structure for grassland birds. Midewin's seed production beds already produce 30-50 lbs of seed from twenty species of medium- and short-stature native grasses and sedges, but more seed is needed. The original partner, IDNR Mason State Nursery, was unable to continue in the agreement, and we developed an alternative strategy to accomplish the objectives. Midewin seasonal staff, volunteers, and a planting contractor installed plant materials purchased or grown during 2006 and 2007. During summer 2007, seed and plant materials were used primarily to enhance diversity within a 430-acre habitat restoration. The plant materials also allowed expansion of seed production by another 2,500 feet of beds, and are expected to gradually double the amount of seed produced during the next 2-3 years.



Seasonal crew members harvest dropseed from established seed production beds on Midewin.



Volunteers plant prairie dropseed plugs for future seed production on Midewin (photos by Julie Sacco).

Year Awarded: 2006
Project completion: 2007
Report number: 2 of 2
Expenditures:

- Total funding \$46,300
- 2006 expenditures: \$37,330 for plant materials (plugs and seeds)
- 2007 expenditures: \$8,970 for plug purchases and planting contracts

Eric Ulaszek 815-423-6370 x211



**Midewin National
Tallgrass Prairie**
30239 South State
Route 53
Wilmington IL 60481